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RESURGENCE

BY

ESLIE G. STAW

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Am. poems
(1922 -
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RESURGENCE

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BY
LESLIE G. SHAW



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NEW YORK
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY
1922

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Printed by
The Barnes Printing Co., Inc.
229 W. 28th St., N. Y.

To
JOAN

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RESURGENCE

RESURGENCE

THERE was a time when ever gloriously
Unto my heart a music, as in prophecy,
Sang down the years—A magic golden horn,
Heralding a valiant pageantry at morn,
When yellow banners rose in gallant praise
Of the mighty forward march of conquering days.
—And then, as brief and brilliant as a dying
sun,

Bronze tones and blazoned banners faded and
were done.

Then others said to me, Be now mature,
Pass by the myths of childhood, find the lure
Of adolescence but illusions mask,
And measure to the stature of an adult task.
I spoke in scorn, It was a voice of truth
I heard; Not one, as yours, in error spoke to soothe
Me into lethargy, and so be brought
Into your stuffy chambers of sick thought.

—And denying ever its alloy
Still was I forsaken of old joy.—

Now fled the virgin rapture of sweet Spring,
And Autumn's fragrant mellowness—The sting
Of keen response to earth that one-time surged
Like April sap in maples, upward—urged,
Had passed, as fleeting as a bird on wing.
Something was gone, and it was everything.

As if I swam and sank in oily waves,
I knew only oblivion that laves
The weary mind with peace and murmuring
sound,

And visions swift; And in soft treachery bound,
I could not free myself, until at length,—
And years it may have been that passed—the
strength

Of great extremity arose in me.

—I heard afar a rustling melody,
A living symphony of hidden things,
Of crickets chirping near green leaves, Of wings
That swiftly beat the perfumed air in flight,
And little buds singing their way to light.
It trembled in my ear as the muted roar
Of waves on a dear and long-forgotten shore.
I wept with joy, and then I surely rose
As by a miracle; And where I chose,
I walked upon the languorous waves, whose power
Had grown, mist-like, illusion in that hour;
I cried, Now have I wakened from a dream,
Have seen the falsehood in its lambent gleam.
And even as I spoke, the conquering song,
Trumpeted in golden horn so long,
Swelled to diapason, and glowing, hung
Like clouds of fire upon the air, and flung
A rhythmic challenge to the listening sea,
And sent forth tidings, not of victory
That was to be, but victory that was,
Over death, and sleep more dark, and ills that
pass.

And it confirmed the steady faith that wills,
The everlasting stars, the little hills.
“Beauty for ashes,” it sang; a long re-birth;
Joy renewed at the mother-breast of earth.

A LEGEND

SHE was a lover of beauty,
And she wanted to write of beautiful things—
“Of old, unhappy far-off things,”

She called them.

At any rate they were nowhere near.

But the neighbor's player-pianos on the little side
street

Hammered out jazz, or else

They played “Burning of Pompeii.”

And then there were talking machines, of course.

And in the summer evenings

The tremulous bleating of a cornet

Essayed futilely to find “The Lost Chord.”

The children fought lustily in the streets,

And their mothers talked over porch railings of
sales

On georgette crepe and granite ware. . . .

And a deadly pall clouded her vision.

Until one day she remembered

That the king of men had moved

Understandingly among all people

And had spoken to them in parables

And had shared in immeasurable love

Their pleasures or their grief.

And then she thought that many years ago

The futile cornetist was a shepherd

Piping to Syrian hills,

And the shrill-voiced women

Were the madonnas of many an ancient twilight,

Painted by old masters.

ADVENTURER

EVER you wooed vicarious romance
Wore gallantly and with a royal mien
Your robes of poverty as you had been
The chosen of some mighty circumstance.
And in a bark absurdly frail you rode
Triumphantly and sure uncharted seas—
Untutored quite, yet with consummate ease
You braved high storms, when lordly giants
strode
Across black battling clouds—and asked no rest.
With demon courage and a faith sublime
You sailed beyond the rocks for some strange
clime
That even you, afar, might not have guessed.
Whatever port it may have proved, we knew
Who knew your simple craft, that first land-fall
Was made with colors flying, spite of squall
Or calm, and that romance awaited you.

IN A STORAGE HOUSE

REMARKABLE how clear my mind is,
As to detail.—

“No, this picture is numbered 38,”
I tell the skilled packer, appallingly efficient.
And I think how I bought the picture,
One golden afternoon in Florence,
And judged just how it might wonderfully be
placed

Above a little lacquered table.

“Yes, that goes to the auction rooms,
Along with 35 and 37.

That percolator—O, send it too;
It may bring a beggar’s dime or so.”

“But, lady—I’ll give you a dime for it.”
I attend vaguely to such subtle degradation—

“Why, how absurd of you—keep it, of course,
And that kitchen ware—and any of those little
things.”

I think ironically how cheaply bought
Is this new aura of munificence.

“And this? Certainly you may have it;
Take it to your wife.

You have a wife?” O, yes, he had.

Most men had wives, I reflected.
Perhaps some even loved them.—

I wonder how rapidly and well
An infant cynicism grows these days.—
These packers, they need any little scrap
They can gain from the debris

Of shifting or of broken homes.
It was just as well, no doubt, they didn't know
How proudly that was bought, how joyfully this.
Such a dingy and disordered kind of work
It must be for them.
Seeing always unbuilding—their minds
Must be crushed under mountains
Of stray detail—amazingly anomalous
Are these desk contents, heaped on the floor.
“And just one thing more—Yes, I've given you
The address for all these different lots.
And now *that's* done, for all of us.”
I tell myself there's nothing left
And the memory will be cut clean
Like a most admirable surgical wound.
Very cordially they take me to the elevator.
The percolator no doubt did that.
Somehow even the manager exudes cordiality.
“Well, we don't usually take checks,
But we'll take yours.”
And my demon-clear mind
That works so well when nearest
The abyss of pain, records, like a camera
His heavy jowls and kindly eyes.
He had need for kindness, in this business,
He who saw so much of wreckage
And guessed much more, that wasn't there to see.
And as the demon-camera mind works on,
Stray flashes come from nowhere, unbidden—
A puzzled child asking her mother

One sultry Sunday afternoon, to explain
What she had learned that day
About a house built on the sands—
And a young girl in a street-car,
Going to work,
From whose coral lips came,
In nasal nonchalance,
“O, well, the first hundred are the hardest!”

THE PURPLE DECADENCE OF 1890

(Suggested by Holbrook Jackson's "The 1890's")

A THOUSAND strange and curious stones in-
laid
And wrought in fretted gold—that flash and
grow;

In each new light a warm and different glow—
And scented peacock feathers strangely made.

Brocaded robes and robes of pearly frost
And velvet cloaks and noble hats with plumes
That undulate and vary as a flower that blooms,
And pass 'neath palace doors with arms embossed,
Or ride in glittering equipage to gaze
Upon the picturesque and poor, that throng
The London streets—those Juliets of chance
Those passing Venuses of red romance
Who smile and dally as they pass among
Old scarlet poets of new and perverse ways.

The gentle dandy poetizing down the strand
Who later clothed in Sapphic dressing-gown
Writes those brave sonnets that the rich demand
Or for a nod from some Earl plays the clown.

Lean hectic youths who tavernwards are bound
In search of peripatetic days of lore
When sages gathered at the tavern door
To see in wine what wisdom could be found.

A thousand books in bindings rare and mellow
With pages made unique with black and white
And magazines bound in a classic yellow
To put decorum in a proper fright.

The palace of varieties new born
Where gathered minor bards who sang the charms
Of dancing wenches, as of Helen, until morn
Then wrote in anguished verse of empty arms.
And "art for art" that grew strange hot-house
flowers,
And made a murm'rous music for the dreary
hours.

ANTIPHONY

O GOD, thou hast laid me low
I bow my head before thy wrath,
As a broken tree before a mighty wind.
But I will comfort thee.

My deeds are scattered in the dust
And no good comes of them.
My friends have forsaken me.
Believe in me.

Nay, I will deny thee
For thou hast forsaken me;
I will dig deep into my own heart for comfort.
I am the living God.

I will dig deep into the giant man
Caged in me
Like a mighty beast in fetters.
I am thy strength.

I will proclaim my greatness.
Men shall know that the beast is unfettered.
They will flee before his strength.
Thou shalt love thy brother.

Nay, I love him not.
I shall conquer him:
He shall tremble in fear before me.
Man's wrath availeth not.

If wrath availeth not,
If sin slay itself,
What shall prevail?

Love shall prevail.

But my brother loves me not;
He has mocked me.
My heart is sore against him,

Love begets love.

I cannot love: my faith is dead.
I see no beacon, rising calm
Above the seething waves of discord.

Thy faith shall be renewed.

O God, that I might abandon myself
As a seaman to the waves,
And let thy kindness bear me up.

Thou shalt, for thou hast so desired.

IVORY TOWER

IN silver cloth and frosted robes you sate
And mused how strange the sounds that came
and went

Or how in clam'ring haste the days were spent
Beyond the quiet of your chateau gate,
Where now forewarned all Spring did lay in wait
The trellised roses bearing high their scent
To you, entowered, who heeding never fate
Saw youth go daily by and no lament.

In splendour drew and wavered in the park
A fragrant shadow holding still faint gleam
Of sunset's warmth, and glowed, till like a dream
All vanished and the castle lay in dark.
And as a barren breeze blew round the town,
You drew your robes about you and came down.

ANNUNCIATION

LIES beauty in all things.
Now to a barren world of freshly riven
wounds
Comes virgin proof of life that still abounds
And from some mystic teeming-source still
springs.
The race is not yet run.
All is not said; nor sealed to hope the gates
While loveliness in hiding, potent waits
On that high time when birth shall have begun.
Be not to Isis so unjust as to deny
A fitting spring-time measure of deep joy!

Where mountain heights are set in mist of dreams
And rhododendrons show pale bloom
Against an April sky. And woodland gloom
Gives interval of vagrant happy streams,
And old grey rocks above the heath
Guard this dim valley's twilight rest—
There Spring bids us be still, that we attest
Her living triumph over death.
That she may new-world intimations give
Of all that dies and still does live.

A COMPANION

YOUR thoughts, like fireflies glimpsed at dusk,
and lost,
And seen again, and, leading through still groves
Now wrapped in scented solitude, where roves
A wind before the rain—a faery host—,
Beguile me into phantasy of foreign lands;
And from dim shores comes an old wail of men
Barbaric, in strange splendor, or again
I feel the fire of sun on patient sands.

And on enchanted seas I voyage where
Arises new temples and new shrines of art,
And men thrill to new learning with one heart
That through the ages they may torches bear.
Yours is the magic word that bids me roam,
And yours, the steady lamp that lights me home.

THE CRICKETS

YOU sing of things of olden times
And magic seas in twilight lands
Of drooping sky and white-stretched sands
And rhyming tongues in witching climes.
How is it that your monotone
Leaves me enchanted, and alone?

TWO FRIENDS

YOU were a guest invited to a feast
For whom we brought choice stores
And placed them consciously to please
That you might find a worthy board.

You . . . You entered by the open door
And sat with us the while we spoke
Of simple things . . . and shared our bread,
A silent blessing in your love.

FRA LIPPI'S NUN

THOU lovely one!
An age of naive peace
And innocence, with un-increase
Of harm—still nun—
About thee lies.
Life's fairest gift of fruit
And knowingness find shallow root
In virgin place . . . For eyes
Hast thou to see a measured plane.
Still unaware with sweet tranquility
And mild assurance of no part
In worldlings motley train.—
As in deep cloistered hush, with rarest art
Of quietude, eternal be!

TO A POET

BRIGHT child and free of Greek and glorious
age,
Spirit from its ampler time far-strayed,
An Attic mind swift-flashing as a blade
Through time-worn myths of mediocre gage—
In you, Prometheus like, a hint of rage
And impotence, when virile thought not weighed
To mellowness bids your fine raptures fade
Before reality—life's barren stage—
A cynic hand upon a youthful dream.
Still may you paint in colors rich as wine
Your pagan dance where softly plays the gleam
Of polished limb against the laden vine,
Until at length from life's long-stagnant stream
You draw anew old beauty to be mine.

MEDIAEVAL WANDERER'S SONG

THE open road is my abode
And wandering is my sweetest rest;
New paths I roam my only home
And every bird and beast my guest.
And as I rove I widely love—
I wear my heart upon my sleeve
And it is lost at no great cost—
Who gains so much might never grieve—.
For one new moon I count a boon
And every star a new allure;
I woo this flower and every hour
I find it most amazing pure.
Who finds lost gleams in sunset streams
Or greets the dawn beyond the hill
May with me fare and all things share,
And stay or leave me at his will.

A GIVER OF GOOD GIFTS

Beauty is a gift—Gautier

HE said—You are all wondrous fair
No such stars in heaven, as in your eyes
Made quiet by lashes-dusk. And your hair
Holds light of purple and rare bronze, and lies
Close by your cheek in truest symmetry
Of waves, that shine in secret, sudden lights,
Or merge into a softest cloud.—One fittingly
To frame a nun's white brow. Or else affrights
Your calmer moods with tempestuous swirl
And wantonness of brown and scornful curl.

You are no thing of one dull patterning
Like unto a day of all drear clouds, or one
Of same stint, changeless measure, lightning
Only the cloud to bright and wearisome sun.
Never from elfish art
Might graceful wit thus stray;
Alike of sun and shade you take a part
To fashion your unique and charming day.
Cool rains and April-misted nights, and blue
Thin skies and Autumn fires are all a part of you.

Your voice conveys to me the sound of water, sing-
ing
In far and happy places; and the mouth that
frames
Sweet words has magic power of bringing
Light to dead discourse that slower logic lames.
Of wit and art and beauty you are wholly made.
Nor one, nor any other part does so outvie the
other

That any needsome grace is placed in shade
Or man is left with power to fancy yet another.
I know no swinish man, in courtesy
So-called, who worthy of your slightest whim
might be.

Your breasts are white, and sweeter yet the soul
Of broadly loving youth, that charity to all
Does daily know and practice. And so, whole
In being, builds between the two no stunting wall.
Soft are your hands and shapen so
That music drawn from ivory keys, through
power
In them, is treble prized. And low
And hush't each melody of your enchanted hour.
And so faint music runs through all your days
And dims with sorcery your matchless ways.

And yet, poor man, he grossly lied
In all but this, his faith. For ever
Has it been to man denied
In love, the truth and seeming to dissever.
Grace might have been, and was, no doubt
As grace in woman goes. But had he known
Himself, the artist's art he had found out.
Then birth might he have given to fool's groan—
For thus it is, in conjuring charms, the lover
Fails he never. He wishes for, bespeaks
A gift (It grows to being, and another
From depths unknown, an Aphrodite rises).
Seeks

Vari-coloured passion from the buoyant springs
His own; and straightway thanks unto his lady
sings!

LOVE AND DEATH

NOW, Death, I greet you with a willing Yea!
Desiring nothing here on earth, I yearn
For still and slumb'ring places, for this day
I've drunk life deep: her fires no longer burn.

Forever in a twilight realm I'd hold
Close to my heart the wondrous murm'ring voice
Of you, who, knowing dim ultimate things,
Proclaimed us one, and near you drew the wings
Of rare and holy angels who rejoice
When earth's dull chains of use and want do
break

And earth's mean blasphemies of facile love
Are silenced in victorious cries that shake
The pillars of love's temple where now move
Old priests who cower and mumble toothless
prayer

That their dull creeds and rites shall still enslave.
. . . Dead futile art—for in your love you bear
Rich ageless alchemies that time's lies brave.

No more I'll turn and fret at prison bars
Of sense—With you, a living flame, I rise
Beyond all human touch, and singing stars
I move among in night's eternal skies.
No more I'll chafe, imprisoned in life's dream—
In earth or heaven is no thing can change
This splendid moment as it towers supreme
Guarded in mysteries beyond life's range.
Now feeling all, with striving all forgot
With your high soul attained, I long for rest.
Come Death! and wean me from such empty lot,
My lips are hungry for still Lethe's breast.

FAILURE

I SOUGHT to veil in robes of mirth, true sight
That cried all false the fevered path of days,
Bearing rich thought before them in a maze
Of sound and colour ceasing not for night.
Unto my heart I counselled, pluck this thing
Forever out; make lyric your high power
To gild each day and quicken every hour
Until grief's knell you herald as you sing.

My heart surged up with promise of old strength
And strove your well-loved image to efface
Made for itself a palace of new grace
And cried a splendid victory at length.
And still as roses spring beneath their grave,
In sleep, Beloved, my heart you still enslave.

DA VINCI'S HEAD OF CHRIST

SO simple in thy clarity
That with mere color and mean brush
Wrought has he, in pale transparency,
Spirit on cold stone: singing faith in chapel hush.

Here are no thorns; no cross:
Only in triumph meek, that love
That was reviled of men and knew no loss
And from death rose, that it might prove

The kingdom that dies not: nor has birth
But is and was, and so shall be
Whole in itself, nor any dearth—
Knowing no wrong in its rich purity.

Some cry, But is a victor there?
See that wan face in very agony
Of death: a bleeding heart laid bare.
No victory his own. The betrayer, his Gethse-
mane.

Flesh not the conqueror. White
Winged faith the power. In proof true
To an ancient promise for the night,
"If it were not so, I would have told you."

SUBCONSCIOUS

The Coward

I STOOD beside a door where filtered through
A glorious bar of light foretelling vast
And airy avenues, far-winding, past
Dusty plains to fields hill-set and new.
I longed for high adventure, longed to find
The promised tang of freedom down those roads
Beyond the door; to seek out 'strange abodes
And volatile, roam with the spring-time wind.

I pressed against the door with unsure hand
Though knowing full the strength of my desire
To sense the wonders hid, to feel the fire
Of ardent strength adventuring down the land.
Yet held by bonds of some drear natal shore,
Unfelt till now, I faltered, closed the door.

SUPPLICATION

DREAD hold of night, I ask surcease
Of your unasked dominion over that far land
Where nightly I am borne by your strong hand
And pray an unimpassioned peace.

Fill not my heart with whisperings
Of ghostly days, and happy days
Break not night-calm with whisperings
Of love that comes, and never stays!

AGAINST DEATH POMP

STAY the barbaric hand,
Veil the profaning eye.
Let the dead dust be dead
And bury it quietly, quietly.

Blaspheme not, when life has fled
Cherish only the vital memory
Let the dead dust be dead
And bury it quietly, quietly.

THE ALCHEMIST

• **S**EEK not to make clear-known to thee
All the tortuous ways of life
For wisdom as apart from the blind strife
And need of nature can no profit be.
Great heights are there to climb.
These shall ye know, when blossoms each high
time.

Till then, know only that does urging press
Deep pregnant meaning to thy radiant own.
Turns to a magic place all it does gaze upon
The vital sight and want of livingness.
Then having power to much within thy gird
Shall life outstretch at thy wise-spoken word.

BEATRICE D'ESTE TO A LOVER

ENCHANTED wine you might have found,
A draught of potent, magic Spring
That old grey days once more might sing,
And youth with fresher notes should sound.

Had you faint touch of alchemy
That lonely thing, one selfless thought,
Much loveliness you might have brought
Through the dark night, Eternity.

For heart, not mind, our tutor is;
All logic by its warmth is known.
Francis of old went not alone
Midst lepers; love was ever his.

We shall be children to attain
That Heaven which on earth does lie
In faith to see abundantly
One lasting beauty with stain.

Ourselves of choice do hourly mold
The circumstance, the daily thing,
The vision; or at length we bring
Unto life's shrine, a word untold.

How comes a child to Paradise
But by his simple, eager prayer?
Take you of earth such earthly care
That you see not, that yet have eyes?

Had you a wish to see me bring
Across far seas of thoughts roving
A thousand gleaming sails of ships,
A freight of human lore bearing
Rich you had been, and peace your fate.
With beggared faith, you come too late.

THE SUICIDE

SHE seemed to us a child lost in the market
place,
And wondering, and quite unseeing in the din
How there were brutal faces near, and how the
dust
Of many careless trampling feet hung heavy
there.
We saw her turning in the midst of heat and
sound,
Laughing and curious at the laden stalls of wares.
Loving the brightly colored things and touching
them
As she passed lightly by,—and nodding now and
then,
Gaily, and with a pleased surprise, at some new
face
That looked on her in friendliness; for, like a
child,
She saw no strangers anywhere, but people much
alike . . .
A shifting pageant, wonderful and ever new;
And in the darkening street she moved 'till dusk
alone,
Not minding much the jostling throng that
pressed toward home,
Though sometimes even she found their touch
rough,
Brushing her aside, unheeding all save the late
hour.

But when the lamps were lighted in the streets,
and stalls
Were closed, and eager footsteps turned into
sure ways,
She felt that she was tired, and saw the darkness
creep on her
Like something nameless: and she knew she was
alone,
And quite apart from those who hurried home
so busily.
So, very tired, and seeing in the sudden dark
A strange conspiracy beyond her grasp, she
closed her eyes,
As frightened children do, and trembling, fell
asleep.

TO A SEAMAN

Alfred Bjorja

I SAW you come and go with quiet mien
All-heeding and attendant on the ruling mind
To bend your ship's desire to sea or wind
Or thwart, in fate, a freakish mood of spleen.
At times of calm, you stood, a granite man
Symbolic, carved against the western sky
Peering from 'midst the bows as to descry
With eyes to treachery trained, the eternal plan.
I marvelled at your fortitude and selfless will . . .
Unquestioning you moved as in a sick dream's
world
When seas grew murderous and a great wind
hurled
Tempests of ghoulish hate against your skill.
And then one day you told me how, afar,
You knew a ship with forty-seven sail
And how the moonlight, gleaming fairy pale
Lighted each swelling sail and singing spar.
I thought that never was fidelity
So mingled with a lover's tender artistry.

NEUROSES

The Ghost

WITH groping hands I sought for some dear
thing
Known well to me but distant as a dream
Or followed, half-afraid, a dancing fitful gleam
Of some bright joy I knew must color bring
To wan grey days—or light a level path
My feet had trod for lo! these aimless years—
A path to one irresolute, of tears
And all the plaint of a dead soul's piteous wrath.
But never could make mine one single loveliness
Or once see through the stifling vaporous wall
That barred from my vague touch the sense
of all
Warm human-kind or simple blessedness.
Held captive in a fainting spirits' tomb,
My courage sickened and I chose this doom.

THE UNDYING

LIFE—in one hour you burdened me
With fleet mockeries and ghost-grey memory.

At your touch I saw, as at magic words
A world of spreading green, a plain
Of golden haze, where soaring birds
Taxed the heart with melody's pain.
And sat I goddess-like, throned and serene
On a still mountain height, set in purple cloud.
Where lay the world before me—As a queen
I viewed this gem—As a queen, throne-proud.
And you, radiant as a spring-time sun,
As a sun blinding to unvisioned mortal eye—
But was I mortal then, or was I one
With laughing gods—No mortal, I.

Two demi-gods, bright with beauty of youth
Reading the past and all that was to be
In the depth of awakened eye. Truth,
Deep wisdom, saw we, and serenity.
All of beauty we had heard or thought
Or lived—all of wonder we had ever known,
All, time-laden, we had brought
From that far land, whence we came alone.
And sought the spirit of ancient lore, that sings
Of other lives and loves that die,
That we, knowing many things,
Should live, in faith and guarded mystery.

Over an April sky
A light-blown cloud
Cold mists for a shroud.

No one knows
Where swiftly goes
The fragrance of the rose.

Where goes the soul of music, in chord and chime,
The laughter of a child;
That short allotted time—
Harmony of all tones, sweet and wild,
Time when pulse and eye and hand
Tell in one short and poignant breath
More than mind has ever planned—
Go these things down to death?
To a still black river of death,
Whence rises a chill grey cloud
To meet a barren dawn, that cries aloud
To Earth—Beauty to me restoreth!

It was never so.
We know, not knowing how we know,
All we have felt or dreamed on earth shall grow
Into the web of time, and shall before us go,
Till myriad-sensed, we fixed shall be
As tranquil stars, in the long night, eternity.

1916.

SYMBOLIC

GREY clouds have gathered and have hung
G Day-long with leaden weight, as malice
They had felt, so to hide the sun,
No life is in the air, nor do
The leaves stir, as when the breeze taunts them.
Toward a weary night, the day has spun herself,
Half fainting, she closes skeptic eyes.

And now through darkening mists
Break forth a hundred waves of gold.
Giving new-world glimpses of radiance:
In pure and aureate light are consecrate
A spire, a roof, a village now re-born,
As on a high and fore-told hill were set
A magic city, so the twilight change is wrought.

THE MOTHER

ALL night long she moved not
Nor left, close by the bedside,
The low chair: but watched the flickering rays
Light wistfully the small white face.

Grief drowned in grief, and beaten,
Faith listless, hope forgotten of the past,
Anguish beyond her frozen world,
Passive, she watched her child.

No tears had she, nor any bitter plaint.
The childish hands were still, and so was she.
Her one life's flower was broken,
And dead, and far more dead, was she.

THE LIVING DEAD

CREATURES of shade and cold half-light
Dwellers of tombs and ways withdrawn
Mystically filling the living dawn
With ghostly hint of strange foresight . . .
These quiet ones at day do cease
Their hold . . . And home toward lifeless peace.

Not such we fear; the visitants dread
Are those dear living—more distant
Than a foreign land, whose loved implant
Shall sorrow bear—the living dead!
These come like dreams of shadowed lands
And touch us nightly with regretful hands.

REST

YOU are the shrine to which I come—
A cooling spring,
Where tyrant moods and fevers vain
Are given still repose: nor stirred.
Constant and still are you, nor made to stir.
You hold glimpses of truth, immutable,
That ebbs not, like waters,
Nor rises to the moon in old self-seeking
But knows dim and quiet ways,
Remote from earth.
Here is deep rest, and shadow as of woodland,—
A pause in summer's heat,
A lull in human stress,
Here, at your feet,
Grant me deep sleep!

WASTE

LIKE sparks borne upward on a hungry flame,
And jewelled but one moment in the dark,
Then breathing back into the night the same
Brief ardor of their birth, so my thoughts rise.
For life, a monster flame, with fabled greed,
Thus bears me on, devouring good and ill,
Splendidly loyal to an atavistic creed,
Unheeding any plaint that aught be spared.
And, as the spreading evil tongues possess
First one, and then another blessed shrine,
Light eagerly, then char, each loveliness,
These wistful wraiths, like souls released, ascend.
And deeds conceived to crimson all the skies
With brilliant pageant-blaze, and guide its wrath,
As fleeting as such ghostly sparks, arise
Above the havoc flame, and glow, and die.

YOU were a voice heard in dreams,
 Heard dimly, and buried
 In the dark caverns of sleep.
 Buried until a time might come
 When need should call it forth.
 —For no thing in dreams is lost.
 And the voice spoke of peace,
 “Be not troubled, my child;
 Neither have fear.
 For in your breast
 Is a giant in fetters.
 If you will release him,
 He will do your bidding.
 Hidden in you are many wonders;
 When the time comes, they will unfold.
 Do not stifle them in fear.
 Live greatly.
 Learn to live as a swimmer
 Who abandons himself to treacherous waves,
 And finds himself borne up.
 Do not fear, my child;
 And know always that I am here.”
 Thus you spoke to me silently,
 And your message was borne
 Down windy caverns of sleep—
 Strange and alien vistas.
 And a faint remembrance
 Filled waking hours with mystery,
 With tidings as a shadow,

That spoke of an approaching form.
And when the dream was fulfilled
And the fore-shadowed hours appeared,
They were in turn
Like fevered pictures in a dream.
For they were filled with discord
And with ghoulish figures,
And menacing tongues.
And then I heard your voice, antiphonal,
Rising and falling in a conquering rhythm,
And at length rising above
The savage discord.
And again you said,
"Do not fear, my child;
Know always that I am here."
And I knew I listened to words of love
—Of a great far-seeing love,
That harbored no images of self
But tended as an acolyte his shrine,
The services of deep devotion.
And my heart leaped up
When I heard aright
The words that had run, like a minor melody,
Through a maze of days and nights.
It was as if silver trumpets
Had proclaimed a glorious victory.
And my heart echoed and answered
With a single cry,
As that of a child who was lost,
And finds again the path of love.

LISA GIOCONDA

IN the twilight of beauty you sit by old rocks
Where the evening of time hangs a mantle of
cloud
'And shadows of purple, dusk-tinged, as a veil—
Strange enchantress, your dim secret magic
enshroud.

You have looked on far shores where rare splen-
dours arose
And have felt yourself sway on the tide of desire
Toward new seas whence came ships from ports
charmed and unknown—
From the great Renaissance and its consummate
fire.

You have voyaged time-free to all lands and all
climes,
Through the ages have been as a seer without
age:
You have known the meek heart of St. Francis
or Anne
And have trembled war-girt with a monarch's
high rage.

A story is told of a princess long dead
Through centuries of lore in sarcophagus found—
As of old radiant still with a grace from which
 death
Has fled shamed—and her beauty is yours,
 mystery-crowned.

As a prophet of youth clothed in garments of time
With faith visioned and calm you foresee all
 strange ends
And await that far shore where the sought is
 the found
And the child with old craft to a new peace
 ascends.

TO A WOOD-THRUSH

OF dim and twilight ways you give us sight
When slowly all that still is, and withdrawn,
And mellowed after days long—wearied dawn
Finds shelter in the hour of coming night.
And now you magically at dusk create
With elfin silver flute, a dim forecast,
Lost in its weight of tranquil thought, of massed
And shadowed groves, where old gods meditate.

Bewitched and still they pause erewhile to free
Unto your charmed cadences a vast
And myriad sense. High captives till has passed
That brief and poignant spell;—as mortals, we
Do know alike a moment blessed, and live
That time, your cool and faery voice does give.

CHALLENGE

STRANGE, still—this thing—that you,
Who shatter with a careless hand
Each beauty of a gentle hue
And mutely murderous still stand
Should thus exempt from penance be,
Drowning in sense all sensibility.

A MEDIAEVAL PORTRAIT

TWILIGHT of beauty! Gentle repose
After a youth's bright noon;
When soft forebodes the tranquil moon
Of night. Purple shadows close
Around that still-poised head . . .
Setting perfect for a queen of hidden ways
Who likes not the inquietude of day's
Swift images, through tortured fancy led. . . .
You are a harp, with muted golden tone,
Touched by the fingers of stars, on hills, alone.

TO ———

AH! Sing to me until senescent stars
Fall wearied at the sound of an old plaint
More sad than time . . . a sonorous chant grown
faint

At dawn . . . Of souls in bondage, and of scars
Born of the spirit's groaning fabled yoke.

Now let me hear Delilah's subtle voice
Of faithless passion, murmuring rejoice
In scarlet victory, 'ere day awoke.

Sing me words, tear-edged, as with Isolde's lyre
Lulled Tristan in a perfumed, swooning sleep;
And cast your spell of evocation deep
About me, like an evanescent fire.

Ah! golden vessel wrought to hold the wine
Of very life, a little while be mine!

FORGIVENESS

IF I should see you turning where that old
path winds
My heart would leap with ancient joy and cer-
tain pride,
And for an instant I'd forget a gulf more wide
Than centuries . . . that lies between two faith-
less minds.
And I should see with older and with truer sight
The unchanged vestures of an inward unchanged
grace,
That meant for me—how long it seems—a hidden
place
Of peace, and ever in the darkness a sure light.
Ah! If I held that vision through the night till
dawn
You might return again to wake me from a dream
More real than death—that only dims the fitful
gleam
Of earthy lamps, when earth's senescent glow
is gone.
And like a homing bird that wings, long-lost,
apart,
My love would swiftly rise and nestle in your
heart.

NOCTURNE AFTER CHOPIN

PIPING of a hidden lute
Faery, drowsing, distance-hushed
Colored with a twilight note
Of massing waters, now dusk-brushed
Bearing shadowed messages
Of other peace and stiller rest,—
Calm that fairer dawn presages
Fairer dawn and stiller rest.
Yield thyself to magic hands,
Walk nightward where white beauty gleams!
This shall be a dreamless night
Haunted by a thousand dreams.

THE ISLES OF THE BLEST

Tao

AS waves that lap a strange and mortal shore
Dim music pulses on the shores of time
Where tranquil and immortal dwell enisled
And quired in golden solitude, the blest.

*They rise, rise ever, past labor and longing,
Past labor and longing, here dwell the blest.*

They burn with the light of peace, the blest,
Where, knowing all and striving never,
They pause, 'ere the white dawn of Paradise.
Attuned to time, the blest, where the rhythm
Of peace is one with the swell of timeless waves,
Like music, lapping on eternal shores.

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